

# **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**

## **What you need to know**

### **What is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?**

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease is a common viral illness caused by Enteroviruses. Small blister-like sores commonly appear in the mouth (usually on the inside of the cheek and tongue, sometimes on the gums, roof of the mouth, and lips). Similar sores resembling a rash may appear on the backs of the hands, palms, top of the feet and soles. A fever is sometimes present. The sores can last up to ten days.

### **How is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease spread?**

Hand, Foot and Mouth disease is spread person to person by direct contact with nose and throat discharges (spread by droplets) and stool (feces) of infected persons.

### **How long is a person contagious?**

A person is most contagious during the first week of illness.

### **Who can get Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?**

Usually children under age ten get hand, foot and mouth disease, although adults can get it too. It occurs mostly in the summer and early fall. Outbreaks in schools, day-care centers, preschools, and nurseries are common.

### **Is there a treatment for Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease?**

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for this virus.

### **How can Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease be prevented?**

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially after changing diapers and using the bathroom.
- Clean dirty surfaces and soiled items like toys and countertops with soap and water, then disinfect with a solution of 2 teaspoons of household bleach to 4 cups of water.
- Wash soiled clothes promptly in hot soapy water and dry in clothes dryer.
- Seal disposable diapers in a plastic bag and put in a tightly closed garbage can.
- Exclude infected children from day-care or school until fever has disappeared, no new sores are appearing, and child is feeling well enough to participate in regular activities.

### **HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Use soap and running water
- Rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- Wash all surfaces, including:
  - backs of hands
  - wrists
  - between fingers
  - under fingernails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands